



Security Council

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Letter dated 1 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that on Tuesday, 23 February 2016, the Security Council plans to hold an open debate on the theme, "Post-conflict peacebuilding: review of the peacebuilding architecture". The related concept note is annexed.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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Annex to the letter dated 1 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme, "Post-conflict peacebuilding: review of the peacebuilding architecture"

I. Introduction

The United Nations can play a key role in preventing the outbreak, resurgence or continuity of armed conflicts by accompanying and facilitating national processes. However, some of the recent failures of the Organization have highlighted the need to review, in a wide and comprehensive manner, the peacebuilding architecture. Venezuela, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of February, will convene an open debate in order to contribute to the ongoing review process regarding the way in which the United Nations can improve its approach to peacebuilding.

Our understanding of peacebuilding has evolved since the United Nations peacebuilding architecture was created in 2005.¹ The report entitled "An Agenda for Peace"² introduced peacebuilding as a logical progression in the establishment and maintenance of peace; its main goal consisted in preventing a relapse into conflict once a peace agreement was reached.

While the idea of post-conflict peacebuilding still prevails, the Security Council and the General Assembly have acknowledged for some time now that peacebuilding activities are intended to prevent the outburst, resurgence or continuation of armed conflict, thus the importance of short- and long-term measures aimed at addressing the specific needs of societies in conflict or those in post-conflict situations.

The review of the peacebuilding architecture under way in the Security Council and the General Assembly requires Member States to consider peacebuilding in a broader perspective and to address it with greater determination. It is now necessary to have a new focus, not only of the specialized architecture itself, but also of the comprehensive approach to peacebuilding adopted by the United Nations.

In the framework of this broader approach, the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture³ invites us to reflect on the challenges and the future of peacebuilding in the United Nations. In this context, we will focus on some essential elements of the peacebuilding review process, which could help to guide the discussion among Member States.

¹ The Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Fund, and Peacebuilding Support Office.

² A/47/277-S/24111.

³ See A/69/968-S/2015/490.

II. Areas to be considered

(a) Lack of attention to peacebuilding

To many Member States and United Nations entities, peacebuilding is not of crucial importance, and therefore it is not properly funded. In fact, United Nations activities on the ground pay little attention to effective prevention, much attention to crisis response, and relatively little attention to reconstruction and recovery of States. In some cases, after peacekeeping troops are withdrawn, small United Nations offices with ambitious peacebuilding mandates are left behind, but, lacking resources and political attention, they struggle desperately for years to deal with situations of political and security deterioration in the host countries. The reduction in political attention and in the necessary resources for peacebuilding on the part of the United Nations does not contribute to prevent the resurgence of conflicts.

(b) Peacebuilding time frames

A successful peacebuilding process may require extensive periods of time, even decades, and the process may not advance in a linear manner. The United Nations does not currently contemplate time frames in these terms, which leads the Organization to sometimes act with haste and on the basis of rigid peacebuilding templates. For example, rushing elections in post-conflict situations may lead to the resurgence of violence and the reopening of old wounds. In this regard, it is important that, prior to holding elections, extensive and comprehensive dialogues are undertaken to ensure the broadest possible support by the population and relevant stakeholders. Although this process may take longer than what has been the practice until now, it can help to ensure lasting peace.

(c) Importance of development in peacebuilding

Making progress in development is essential to prevent the emergence and resurgence of conflicts. The inability to make progress in economic and social development may lead to the emergence of conflicts in the first place. Overcoming social and economic injustices, offering sources of livelihood to the population and laying the foundations for wide and inclusive economic growth are fundamental elements of every transition from conflict to normality. However, this is not always the case, and many countries in conflict or post-conflict situations fall behind in the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. In fact, 10 of the countries with the worst child mortality rates in the world have been affected by conflict or are dealing with post-conflict situations. It is impossible to achieve lasting peace without economic and social development.

(d) Role of regional and subregional organizations in peacebuilding

Regional and subregional organizations can play an important role in the development of an environment conducive to lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict. Although important alliances have been established between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the field of peacekeeping operations — for instance, between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union — there has been little progress in similar cooperation in the area of peacebuilding. It is therefore necessary to increase

the political focus in the field of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the area of peacebuilding.

III. Briefers

- Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2015 (to be confirmed).
- Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (to be confirmed).
- Ambassador Gert Rosenthal, Chair of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (to be confirmed).

IV. Expected outcome

No results are expected.
